DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 275 843 CE 045 428

AUTHOR Moran, Patricia; And Others
TITLE Trading Tradition. Issues Arising from an Evaluation of the Experiences of Female Apprentices in Male-Dominated Trades in the Hunter Region of New South Wales. Summary.
INSTITUTION TAFE National Centre for Research and Development, Payneham (Australia).
REPORT NO ISBN-0-86397-225-X
PUB DATE 86
NOTE 33p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Apprenticeships; Career Counseling; Change Strategies; Educational Improvement; Educational Policy; Educational Practices; Employee Attitudes; Employer Attitudes; *Females; Foreign Countries; Job Satisfaction; *Nontraditional Occupations; Policy Formation; Postsecondary Education; Sex Bias; *Sex Fairness; Sexual Harassment; Student Placement; *Student Recruitment; Teacher Attitudes; *Trade and Industrial Education; Work Environment
IDENTIFIERS *Australia (New South Wales)

ABSTRACT

A study examined the measures taken in seven colleges in the Hunter Region of New South Wales to promote the entry of women into nontraditional trades. Questionnaires were given to all female apprentices in nontraditional trades and a random sample of male apprentices in the same trades in 1983; all female apprentices who withdrew from training in these trades during 1981, 1982, and the first half of 1983; and all teachers in these trades who had females in their classes during 1983. Females did not face any more problems than males with mathematics in the trades. However, they received less information about career options than males before entering the male-dominated trades. Harassment was a problem for a significant number of female apprentices, with harassment and unfair treatment being more of a problem at work than at school. Male hostility toward women entering trades in which high male unemployment rates exist was also evident. Female apprentices faced particular problems in their access to and experience in nontraditional trades because of beliefs about the role of females in society, and certain practices designed to reduce these problems created the appearance of giving females special attention, thereby leading to even greater negative consequences for the women. Thus, when developing strategies to increase the access of females to nontraditional trades, policymakers and educators must realize that any strategy will have both positive and negative effects. (MN)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED275843

TAFE

TAFE NATIONAL CENTRE FOR
RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

TRADING TRADITION

ISSUES ARISING FROM AN EVALUATION OF THE EXPERIENCES OF FEMALE APPRENTICES IN MALE-DOMINATED TRADES IN THE HUNTER REGION OF NEW SOUTH WALES

SUMMARY

This report does not necessarily reflect the views of the Board or Staff of the TAFE National Centre for Research and Development.

OE 045428

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

M Jones

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

© TAFE National Centre for
Research and Development Ltd., 1986

ISBN 0 86397 225 X
TD/TNC 12.19

Published by:

TAFE National Centre for
Research and Development
296 Payneham Road
Payneham SA 5070

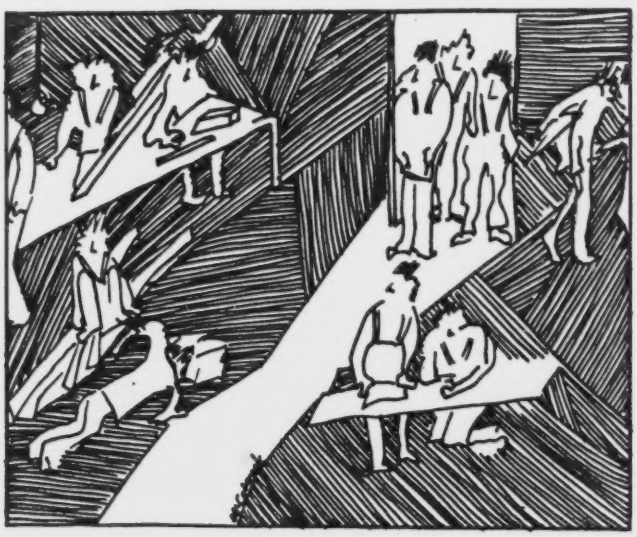
(Incorporated in South Australia)

Distributed by Nelson Wadsworth, PO Box 4725, Melbourne VIC 3001,
for TAFE National Centre for Research and Development Ltd.

Printed by D. J. WOOLMAN, Government Printer, South Australia

TRADING TRADITION

ISSUES ARISING FROM AN EVALUATION OF THE EXPERIENCES OF FEMALE APPRENTICES IN MALE-DOMINATED TRADES IN THE HUNTER REGION OF NSW



Report prepared by Patricia Moran in association with Robyn Dryen, Jo-anne Schofield and members of the Steering Committee: Kaye Schofield (Project Director), Dave Brown, Dave Findlay, Mike Hammill, Geoff Hayton, Graham Hermann, Barbara Pocock and Cathie Sharp. Illustrations are by Katrina McCormack.

Research designed and conducted by Judy Conway and Dianne Hines in association with Cathie Sharp.

The report of a research project initiated by the TAFE Equal Opportunity Training Programme in the Hunter Region and the TAFE Women's Co-ordination Unit and commissioned by the TAFE National Centre for Research and Development.

APRIL, 1986.

FOREWORD

The review of past events in education and training have real value when they point to ways of improvement for the future. This is the point of the research effort which has gone into this publication.

The researchers have taken an important program in the education and training of young females: they have reviewed various aspects of the program and identified its failures and successes. Both failures and successes give guidance as to how future programs aimed at female education and training might be designed and operated.

The recommendations following from the research are directed mainly to TAFE and cover needs not only in the direct teaching environment of the classroom, but also the needs of long term planning, teacher education and student counselling. Conclusions also point to the need for improved management techniques at the college level to cover aspects of student harassment, data collection and community liaison. All recommendations touch on problems in a practical way and should be of significant help to TAFE administrators.

I congratulate the officers who have worked on this report and I commend it to TAFE systems in all States for serious consideration and follow-up.

ALLAN PATTISON
DIRECTOR-GENERAL
NSW TAFE

PREFACE

In Australia, efforts to achieve equal opportunity for women in and through vocational education have taken many forms, including:

- measures to improve the quality of vocational education in traditionally female areas of study and work;
- measures to expand career choices of women through vocational guidance and counselling;
- measures to improve women's participation and performance in technical subjects such as mathematics, physical sciences and computer studies;
- measures to enhance professional competence in non-sexist education through staff development;
- measures to improve the confidence and self-esteem of women;
- measures to create a positive or 'girl-friendly' teaching/learning environment, including the elimination of sexual harassment and the introduction of child-care services;
- measures to break down the sex-segregation in vocational education or in the labour market.

This report is an evaluation of measures taken in the Hunter Region of New South Wales to promote the entry of women into non-traditional trades, that is, of measures to overcome the significant problem of a sex-segmented labour market and its associated vocational education system.

It is a valuable report in two ways. Firstly, it points to the necessity of including evaluative measures as an integral part of any strategy to achieve equal opportunity for women. Such strategies are still experimental. For future policy and practice we need to know more about what works, what doesn't and about the intended and unintended consequences of planned intervention in the labour market and the educational process.

Secondly, the findings of the report and its conclusions should be noted by those in education, training and employment spheres, for they have important implications for policy, for practice and for further research.

I commend it to all those working to assist women achieve their full potential in and through technical and further education, and to those who want to create learning and working environments which are acceptable to and satisfying for both women and men.

Kaye Schofield.

KAYE SCHOFIELD
Head,
Women's Co-ordination Unit,
NSW Department of Technical
and Further Education.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people have contributed their experience, insight and expertise to this study. While it is impossible to acknowledge the help of every individual who made an input to the project, I would like to formally thank a number of people for their special contribution.

The TAFE National Centre for Research and Development provided funding for the project and members of staff at the Centre provided assistance throughout. Members of the Steering Committee provided advice and support to the people involved at the various stages of the project.

Special acknowledgement is due to: Dianne Hines and Judy Conway who designed and conducted the survey and the interviews; to the staff of the Hunter Equal Opportunity Training Programme for the day-to-day support of the project and, in particular, to Cathie Sharp for her unfailing commitment and untiring effort.

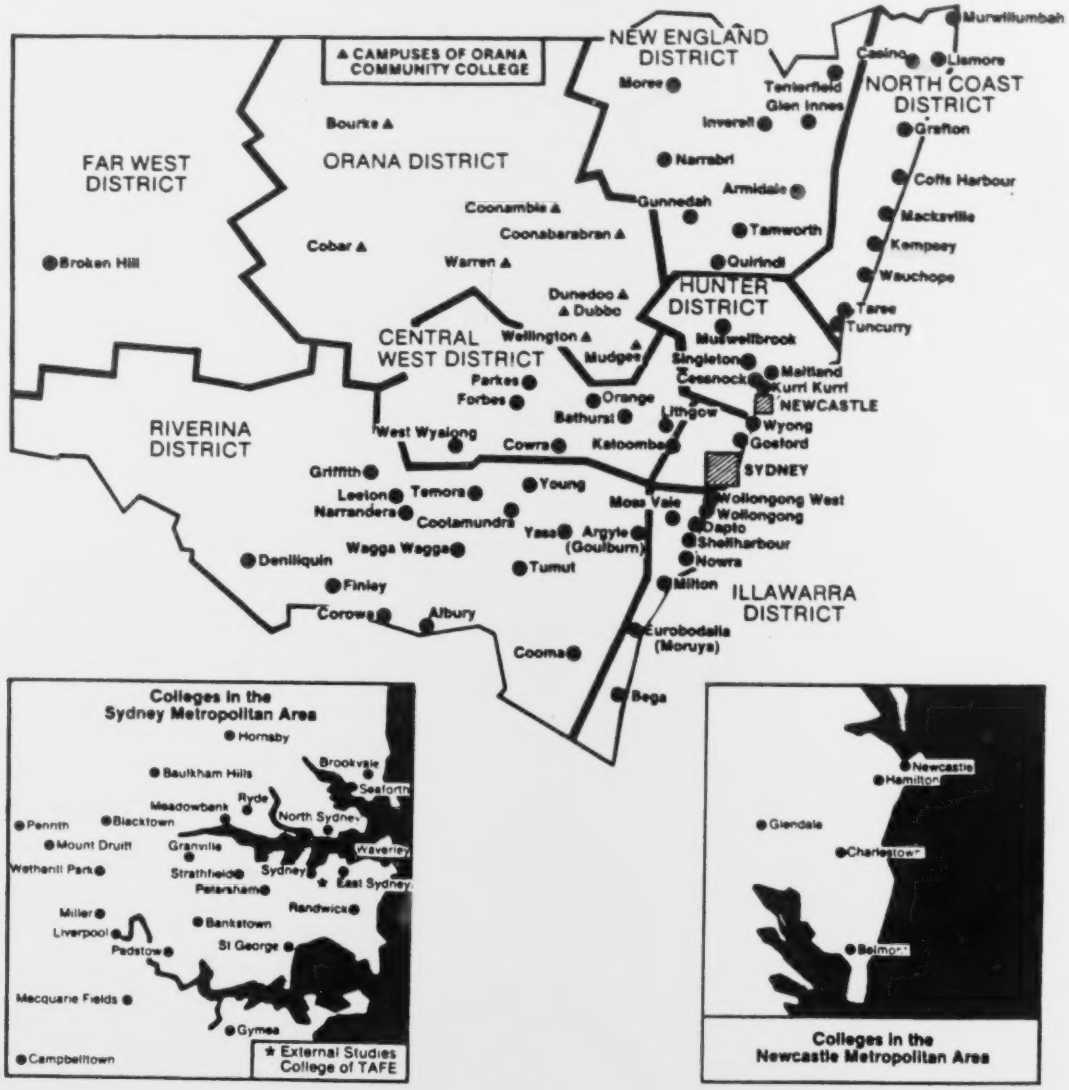
The staff of the TAFE Women's Co-ordination Unit, particularly Trisha Moran, worked hard amidst other duties to produce the final report, Jo-anne Schofield spent many hours at the word processor, and TAFE Information Services provided the services of Katrina McCormack for the illustrations. All those who read the draft documents contributed to the quality of the final report.

Finally, special thanks are due to students, ex-students and staff, who gave up their time to complete questionnaires and participate in interviews.

Kaye Schofield.

KAYE SCHOFIELD

TAFE COLLEGES IN NSW
1986



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

'Might have stayed on...if I'd had a car...if I was older...if I hadn't been the first girl they'd ever taken on...I wasn't so much of a guinea pig...well...I was the experiment wasn't I. I couldn't call it anything but the guinea pig! Made me want to be better than the boys...I pushed m'self. The men let me know I was the only girl all the time. Only one good thing about it...they were all honest, even the bosses told me they didn't want me there...until after I got my first recommendation...then they were all...well she's good...she's coming up all right. I think they should have accepted that if they were going to take a girl on they should have provided the facilities to start with...they should have looked into it more...what girl they were going to pick to make sure she was very independent person...oh...not independent... liberated! I'm pretty old-fashioned in a lot of ways. They took me on to make it look good!...A lot of strain trying to live up to the job. I think I was a bit young to go into that sort of job...My new job is easier to get on with. Not such a large group...no men. Conditions of working with women are different to working with men!

(Female who withdrew from training.)

INTRODUCTION

This is a summary of a research study on the experiences of female and to a lesser extent, male apprentices training in trades considered non-traditional for women in the Hunter Region of NSW in the early 1980's. The purpose of the study was to increase our understanding as TAFE teachers and policy makers of the specific problems that females face when entering male-dominated areas of trade training. This information will enable us to respond more effectively to their needs during training.

The study was conducted at a time of increasing interest in women's access to non-traditional employment and training brought about by the changes in the Australian economy in the seventies. These economic forces, whilst affecting the employment options of both males and females, have adversely affected the employment prospects in 'female occupations'. As trade training has historically been an important avenue of access to the primary labour market for young males, particular interest has focused on making the path of females entering these areas easier. However, as women entering non-traditional occupations face problems by virtue of the fact that these occupations are male-dominated, the findings of this study should prove useful to anyone attempting to address these problems in trade training or training in other occupational areas.

It is recognised that future employment prospects in many of the trade areas are uncertain and in some areas they have declined dramatically in the early eighties. It is also recognised that females attempting to enter these occupations will be met with varying degrees of resentment at the fact that they are competing with males for a decreasing supply of jobs. This research study is based on the premise that women have the right to participate at all levels in the labour market. It is clear that increasing womens' access to work traditionally performed by men is a difficult process. It is also clear that this is an extremely difficult process in times of economic recession and structural change in the labour market. That is, when females *appear* to be taking jobs from male 'breadwinners'. When this emotive argument is used it is often forgotten that *females have the right to be their own 'breadwinners' and, in a large proportion of cases, have absolutely no choice in the matter.*

The research study was conducted in the Hunter Region of NSW because the number of young women in apprenticeship (excluding Hairdressing) rose dramatically in this Region in the early 1980's. This increase was concentrated in trades traditionally dominated by men: fitting and machining, carpentry and joinery,

applied electricity, sign writing, automotive and vehicle trades. In 1980, there were less than a dozen young women in these 'non-traditional' trades; by 1982 there were 219. A number of factors caused this rapid growth:

- Firstly, for a limited period in 1980/81, shortages of skilled tradespeople favoured the entry of young women. Employers were forced by economic necessity to consider women for jobs where primarily they had only considered men in the past.

- Secondly, the economic climate was used to great advantage by community members who combined, against a background of disproportionately high female unemployment, to campaign for better employment and training opportunities for women.

- Thirdly, the NSW Government, which had provided some funds towards this community based campaign, launched the Equal Opportunity Training programme in the region, employing two officers and providing them with an annual budget of $10,000.

The growth in the number of young women in apprenticeship during this period in the Hunter provided a useful opportunity to review the experiences of female apprentices and to develop strategies to promote women's access to and experience in non-traditional areas of training in the future.

The research was conducted at the end of 1983 and the beginning of 1984. Questionnaires were given to:

- all female apprentices in non-traditional trades in the Hunter Region in 1983;

- a random sample of male apprentices in these trades who had females in their classes at college in 1983;

- all female apprentices who withdrew from training in these trades during 1981, 1982 and from March to June 1983;

- all teachers in these trades who had females in their classes during 1983.

Interviews were conducted with a small number of the female apprentices and females who withdrew from training. There are seven TAFE Colleges in the Hunter Region: Newcastle, Belmont, Cessnock, Charlestown, Glendale, Muswellbrook and Singleton. However, the bulk of the apprentices in the survey were training at Newcastle College of TAFE in four trades - Cooking, Composition, Electrical and Fitting and Machining.

MAJOR FINDINGS

The research yielded a wealth of information about the experiences of the apprentices and of females who withdrew from training who responded to the survey. Numerous significant differences were identified in the experiences of female and male apprentices at work and at College and in factors influencing their decision to enter the trades in the study.

At first glance, many of the findings of the research appear inconsistent and, in many areas, inconclusive. The majority of both female and male apprentices reported the training experience to be enjoyable and reasonably easy; and relationships with peers, employers and teachers to be, on the whole, very good. However, a closer examination of the responses to more specific questions about particular problems reveals a complex picture of the experiences of the apprentices. Many of the issues explored in this research are extremely complex and sensitive. Under these circumstances, survey methodology has severe limitations. However, the research was not conducted in a vacuum. Other research has been conducted around related issues in the Hunter and in other parts of Australia. The findings of this research study are thus viewed in conjunction with the findings of other research in the field.

Background to Career Choice of the Apprentices

There were many differences between the background of the female and male apprentices in the survey. The crucial question, however, is whether these differences can be causally linked to success in apprenticeship. Were the female apprentices placed at a disadvantage in their training, relative to the male apprentices, because of these differences?

The data about the experiences of the apprentices prior to entering the trade illustrated that whilst only a marginally greater number of females left high school earlier than the males, *a much greater proportion of females than males did other things before taking up a trade career*. In particular many more females than males had been unemployed prior to the apprenticeship. More females than males had entered the trade via an Introduction to Trade course or a Pre-Apprenticeship course. This is not surprising given the difficulties that females face in entering male-dominated trades. It is often easier for females to secure an apprenticeship after completing one of these courses. More females than males made the choice to take up an apprenticeship after the age of 15 years which could mean that they left high school earlier and made the choice after trying other things (particularly unemployment) and/or that they did not consider this option until they left school. Given that the females reported less exposure than

the males to skills that are considered useful to some male-dominated trades and reported receiving less information on the male dominated trade areas at high school, both explanations are feasible. Whilst half of the females and males would have preferred another job to the one they had, 65% of these females would have preferred another job in an area not dominated by males. The availability of a job was an important factor in the decision of both females and males to take up the apprenticeship but it was more important for the females. On the other hand more females than males chose the job because they thought it might be interesting and a much larger proportion of females than males said that the decision to take the apprenticeship was their own idea.

It is not possible to definitely conclude from the data that some females entered these trades because they couldn't find employment in more traditional areas of work for females but it is also not possible to dismiss the idea. However, if this was the case, then it is likely to be an indication of socialisation and thus it cannot be concluded that these females would make poor students or that they would lack motivation. *The data do clearly indicate that the females did not have the same opportunities at high school as the males to explore the career options in the traditional male areas of employment.*

The females did not have the same exposure as the males at high school to subjects such as technical drawing, woodwork and metal work, which are considered helpful preparation to some trade areas. However, it is difficult to determine the effect of this inequity as these subjects are not relevant to all the trades and the vast majority of female apprentices reported that the training course was moderately easy. It is clear from other research in the field that females, on average, develop a lower competence level in mathematical skills at school than males. This was not seen as a problem by the female apprentices. Whilst the teachers did identify lack of mathematical skills as a problem for apprentices they did not see it as a problem that females in particular faced. Given that the level of mathematics required for most of these trades is not high and that teachers are more likely than the students to think that the standard of work is not high enough *it is quite possible that the inequities in the mathematics education of females and males in general did not place females entering non-traditional trades in a significantly disadvantaged position.* This is a particularly interesting finding given the importance placed on the subject choices of girls in high schools in the literature on women and education. However, it is not a surprising finding in view of the fact that high school students in NSW have very little subject choice before Year 11. The TAFE National Centre for Research and Development has reported on mathematics in trade courses (Osman, 1984). However, sex differences related to performance were not investigated.

Those surveyed reported that they found it easy to get an apprenticeship and over 90% of both females and males were indentured. *There were no significant differences in the number of female and male apprentices indentured but almost half of the females who withdrew from training were not indentured.* As no equivalent data were collected for males, it is difficult to draw any conclusions from this finding alone. However, fewer females than males in Stage III of the training reported that they were still employed at the time of the survey and approximately 21% of withdrawers reported that they were retrenched. Despite the fact that the data is inadequate, in view of the social and economic context, *it would not be wise to dismiss the possibility that employers were less likely to indenture female apprentices than males because as trainees they could be more easily dismissed if necessary.*

AT WORK AND AT COLLEGE

The majority of both female and male apprentices found work and college enjoyable and reasonably easy. No relationship between these variables and completion of either a Pre-Apprenticeship or an Introduction to Trades Course can be determined from the data as only a very small proportion of both females and males found the course hard. Similarly, only a very small proportion of the female apprentices reported any problems in coping with being a female in a male dominated environment and thus the data cannot lead to any definite conclusions about the usefulness of either of these two courses for females entering male dominated areas. However, more females than males reported the courses useful for their trade.

It is in the responses to the very specific questions in the survey that the possibility of important differences in the training experiences of female and male apprentices emerged. Whilst the majority of the apprentices reported that relationships with both sexes were basically good, and most of the teachers didn't think that the male apprentices were hostile to female apprentices, the comments about the conduct of the research made in the interviews and on the questionnaire generally suggest that *at least some of the males were extremely hostile to females doing men's work:*

- 'a nice looking girl with brains would never think of going into a trade';
- 'no...girls get married...waste of a position for bloke';
- 'girls who are interested are rough'.

Isolation emerged as a problem for females in the comments even though only 9.2% of the female apprentices said that they had problems working mainly with men. *It is apparent in the data that isolation was a problem for many females.* It is also clear that for a large number of the female apprentices social interaction was an important aspect of their work. The issue of isolation of females was raised by female apprentices several times when asked about the need for support for females in male dominated trades; the advice they would give to females entering their trade; and in the changes they suggested at College:

- 'Encourage more girls in...it makes it easier';
- Pressure should be applied so that more than one token female is employed...at least two girls together';

- 'Main thing is to have two girls on the job together so they can talk as a group...not as the one dummy';

- 'think about being the only one in thousands of boys...would have to be able to relate to men easily to survive'.

- 'Be prepared for a hard time...after a while it gets a lot better but you've got to be tough to last the first month or two or otherwise you'll just crack under pressure an' have a nervous breakdown. I've nearly had those a couple of times...'

There is little evidence in the study that the females were treated more unfairly than the males. However, there is strong evidence that a reasonable proportion of both sexes thought that *all apprentices were treated unfairly*. There is some evidence that the females were given 'special attention' in the form of easier tasks.

There is some evidence (although inconclusive) that heavy work posed a greater problem for females than males in Stage I and II of their training. The females in Stage III, however, reported that they had learned techniques to cope with the heavy work as well as developed muscles that they hadn't developed before entering the trade. Thus, *the data clearly illustrate that heavy work should not necessarily pose a significantly greater problem for females than males.*

The evidence is strong that attempts both to encourage females into the trades and to provide additional support in the training process was viewed as both unequal and unfair treatment by the male apprentices and some females. The issue emerged several times throughout the findings in relation to the 'Girls in Trades' publicity campaign, the tasks female and male apprentices were given, relationships with peers, employers and teachers, and special assistance for female apprentices. Many female apprentices were aware of the hostility and as a result did not want to be viewed as 'special' or 'different' in any way:

> We're in there as trades*people*. We shouldn't be defined as female trades...we should just be trades. We get away with a lot at work because we're girls...I admit a lot of the time it's wrong. There's a little too much emphasis on us.

The majority of the teachers also supported the view that female apprentices should not be treated differently from the males. Many commented that it was in fact a mistake to do so. Only 16.3% of the teachers thought that female apprentices required special attention in relation to heavy work and protection from males.

The views of the teachers about the experiences of the apprentices were reasonably consistent with the views of the apprentices. Only a small minority were overtly hostile to the entry of females to 'men's work' but 50% of the teachers commented that girls should not be encouraged into *their* particular trade. Only 19% thought that girls should not be encouraged into other non-traditional trades. It is encouraging that 14% of the teachers reported more positive attitudes to having females in their classes after teaching them.

Several important differences emerged between the experiences of the apprentices at work and at college. These differences should be viewed in the context that apprentices spend approximately four days a week at work and one day at college. *More apprentices (of both sexes) found training more enjoyable and easier at work than at college.* This may be related to the fact that some apprentices reported that the training at college was not relevant to the 'real world/work'. The *female apprentices reported better relations with male apprentices at work than at college.* This could well be the result of the time spent at work as compared to college but the fact that there would have been larger numbers of males the same age at college may also have been important. Young men often become more hostile in a group.

Despite this, *sexual harassment, heavy work and unfair treatment were reported by the female apprentices as more problematic at work than at college.* There are numerous possible explanations for this. The extent of problems may have varied by the size of the workplace and the enforcement (and understanding) of Commonwealth and State Anti-Discrimination Legislation. The time spent at work may also have been a factor.

HARASSMENT OF FEMALE APPRENTICES

Harassment includes any form of intimidation, persecution or torment. It may occur for various reasons. The term sex-based harassment (which should be clearly distinguished from sexual harassment) refers to harassment that occurs because one is female or male. Harassment may also occur because of one's place within a group due to age or stage in one's training. The occurrence of harassment for these reasons has not been documented in trade occupations. However, it has been in High Schools (Willis, 1978).

In contrast, sexual harassment is one particular type of harassment which may be sex-based or age or stage related, that is, sexual-type harassment may occur because one is female or male or because of one's age or stage in training. Sexual harassment is confused with sex-based harassment because sex-based harassment, particularly of females, is often of a sexual type.

In this research, the male apprentices were not asked to report on harassment. Thus it is difficult to ascertain the nature of the harassment of the females, that is, whether it was sex-based or age related or stage related. It is likely that some harassment of junior apprentices, of both sexes, took place as part of the induction into the trade culture.

However, if this was the case then it is also likely that this induction process took a different form for females and males. Thus, the distinction between sex-based harassment (a form of sex-based discrimination) and other forms of harassment is blurred. This is clearly evidenced in the data from this research when the types of harassment are examined - much of the harassment is of a sexual type.

The incidence of female apprentices reporting harassment was extremely high. This is a topic that most females find extremely difficult to discuss and many will not report it for fear that others might see it as a reflection of their own moral behaviour. Almost 80% of the female apprentices reported some sort of harassment at least some of the time. Whilst the data are more informative when the incidence of harassment is examined by type, it should be remembered that any amount of harassment is unacceptable and contravenes current Commonwealth and State legislation.

The table below illustrates the extent of various types of harassment reported by female apprentices. It should be noted that the response rates were very high for this question (an average of 90%). Harassment of all types took place at work and at colleges and whilst more females reported being 'whistled at' and 'made fun of' than other types of harassment, the incidence of other types cannot be ignored.

Almost one third of the female apprentices said that their work had been interfered with or damaged at least some of the time. Of those who reported harassment, a large proportion indicated that it took place at work as opposed to college but some said that it happened at both places. Nine teachers mentioned harassment ('bad language and being put down') as a problem for female apprentices at work but none said it was a problem at college.

FEMALE RESPONDENTS' REPORT OF EXTENT OF HARASSMENT (TO SELF)
(PERCENTAGE RESPONSE)

Type	A Lot	Some-times	Never	Total Reporting Harass-ment	N
Ignored	5.2	39.1	55.7	44.4	115
Made fun of	8.5	70.3	21.2	71.8	118
Whistled at	15.3	55.9	28.8	71.2	111
Pressured for Dates	2.9	21.9	75.2	24.8	105
Unwanted Physical Contact	3.5	28.3	68.2	31.8	113
Threatened	1.8	12.8	85.4	14.6	109
Work Interfered with or Damaged	3.6	27.9	68.5	31.5	111

The fact that the teachers argued that many females withdrew from training because of problems they related to their gender also supports the argument that these problems are important. Sexist attitudes and sex-based harassment were also identified as aspects of the training environment that they enjoyed least. A large proportion (approximately 40%) of the male apprentices said that they behaved differently with female and male apprentices and the comments made were not positive. The issue of sex-based discrimination (which includes sex-based harassment) also arose in relation to the advice that females and males would give to other females taking up an apprenticeship in their trade.

The extent of concern about this harassment expressed by the female apprentices varied according to the type of act. They were most concerned about having their 'work interfered with or damaged' and 'unwanted physical contact'. This is supported by the interview data in which the female apprentices expressed hostility towards their male workmates because of this problem; for example:

> Fellows say 'you can't do it properly so what's the use of doing it' ... an' they ended up wrecking my projects on me.

The female apprentices were not asked questions about how they coped with harassment in the survey. However, some factors did consistently emerge in the interview data. It appears that the extent of harassment varied with the extent to which the victim could hide her distress. Some handled the problem by ignoring it, some by standing up to the males and some by calling in persons in authority:

- When I first started work they gave me two weeks to last ... I got harassed something shocking. Within the first month I felt like chucking the job in and I thought ... 'no' ... I'm not letting them get to me and that's when they started treating me as one of the guys ... when I started to stick up for myself. Now they treat me like their sister.

- One day a girl got really upset from the boys stirring her. The teacher took those boys to the Head and he just talked to them and it was alright. Some of the boys did a lot of stirring and got a bit mean and some of the girls got really upset but a lot ignored them and laughed at them and they gave up then ... if they couldn't upset us.

- A girl can take so much from a guy but when they started calling us 'sluts' we couldn't take it anymore and we got straight onto the apprenticeship director. That soon fixed 'em.

The various forms that harassment took can be graded very loosely according to importance. However, whilst 'being whistled at' might not be considered as serious as unwanted physical contact, the fact that it happens to women at all is a reflection of a fundamental view that women are seen, in the first instance, as objects of male sexual attention. One female apprentice interviewed summed this up in the following comment:

> Need to train men that girls are only there to do the job, not as some sex object. They couldn't accept you as just a workmate, thought you were there to get a catch or something.

STAGE VARIATIONS IN THE EXPERIENCES OF THE APPRENTICES

There were many small differences in the responses of female apprentices in Stage I and II and Stage III of their training that didn't exist for male apprentices in different stages. This suggests that, either changes took place for the females during the training process that didn't take place for the males, or that the females who faced the most problems withdrew. *There were less differences in the views of the females in Stage III to the views of male apprentices in general than there were between the females in Stage I and II and the males.* Both females and males thought that they were coping better and had fewer problems in Stage III than they did in earlier stages. Either the females did have fewer problems or they simply acknowledged them less. It is possible that they did face less problems particularly if they felt more accepted by the males. It is also possible that they did not want to acknowledge the problems for fear of being seen as different to the males. The third possibility is that the females who faced the most problems had withdrawn before entering Stage III. Given the high attrition rate for female apprentices this is an extremely plausible explanation.

FEMALES WHO WITHDREW FROM TRAINING

The responses of the females who had withdrawn from training at the time of the survey varied quite significantly from those of the continuing female apprentices on many issues.

The major variation from the general pattern is that less withdrawers were indentured than those who were still apprenticed (54% compared to 92%). There are several possible reasons for the high proportion of withdrawer trainees:

- they may have withdrawn before their indenture papers were drawn up and/or signed;
- they may have been more easily dismissed if they were not indentured; or
- they may have found it easier to leave as trainees if dissatisfied.

It is easier to dismiss a trainee apprentice than an indentured apprentice but it is not possible to conclude that that is why they were not indentured.

Of the withdrawers who did respond to the survey, 20.8% said that they left the training course because they were retrenched from their job. Of these, 50% said it was because there was not enough work, 25% said that they were not good enough and 25% said that they didn't know why they were retrenched.

Thirty-two percent of withdrawers said that they did not leave the trade voluntarily. Approximately 60% said they would like to return to the same trade and another 30% said they would like to do another trade. The problem with the data is that there are no comparative data for males. Thus, we cannot draw any definitive conclusions based on gender. The females who withdrew from training did not report that they left because of sex-based discrimination or isolation. Retrenchment, which may have been the result of sex-based discrimination, was a major problem as well as health, working conditions and pregnancy. However, the comments, interviews and also the views of the teachers lead to the further suggestion that *sex based discrimination was in fact a factor in the high attrition rate for female apprentices compared to that for males.*

> I didn't like it one bit when I was working in the trade on my own. If I'd had another girl with me or even males that I knew I would have felt a lot safer... but not with all th' fellows around. I got out of that as soon as I could.
>
> (Female who withdrew from training.)

SUMMARY

The findings with important implications for women's access to occupations that have been considered non-traditional for women clearly illustrate that:

- Females did not face any more problems than males with mathematics in the trades.
- The female apprentices received less information than males before entering the trade about career options in male dominated areas.
- The vast majority of the apprentices in the study enjoyed their training, found it reasonably easy and their employers and teachers helpful and fair.
- Harassment was a problem for a significant number of female apprentices.
- Female apprentices found relations with male apprentices more problematic at College than at work.
- Female apprentices faced more problems as a result of sex-based harassment and unfair treatment at work than at College.
- Both male and female apprentices found the tasks more enjoyable and easier at work than at College.

The data also strongly point to the possibility that:

- Some females only considered entering a non-traditional trade when faced with unemployment.
- Apprentices of both sexes shared problems in relation to working conditions, perceived fairness of treatment and the lack of relevance of tasks at college.
- Many male apprentices were extremely hostile both to the entry of females into areas of 'men's work', particularly in the context of male unemployment in the trades, and to the 'special attention' that they perceived females to have received.
- Many female apprentices were aware of this hostility and thus did not want to be viewed as 'special' or 'different'.

- Many female apprentices felt isolated in the male dominated environment.

- Many of the problems reported were understated.

- Heavy work was a problem that female apprentices could learn to deal with.

In addition, the data illustrate that further investigations could support the hypothesis that employers were less likely to indenture female apprentices than males because as trainees they could be more easily dismissed.

The full report of the research study examines these findings in conjunction with other work in the field.* In summary, the research report establishes that:

- apprentices of both sexes faced problems because they were apprentices;

- female apprentices faced particular problems in their access to, and experience in, the non-traditional trades because of beliefs about the role of females in society. For example, information on trade-training opportunitites was hard to obtain and harassment was not uncommon;

- the data did not support some commonly held beliefs about the suitability of females to the trades, for example, that females cannot physically cope with heavy work; that they don't like dirty or noisy work;

- certain practices, designed to reduce the particular problems female apprentices faced created the appearance of 'special attention' for the female apprentices and had negative consequences. The female apprentices did not want to be viewed as 'different' from the males. The male apprentices were hostile towards what they viewed as discriminatory practices. This hostility served to exacerbate the day-to-day problems that the female apprentices faced at work and at College.

(Earley, 1981; Heggart, 1982; Newell, 1983; Waugh, 1984.)

CONCLUSIONS

A broad range of strategies has been developed to promote women's access to non-traditional areas of education, training and employment and reduce women's joblessness. The degree of experimentation with these strategies varies from state to state. The findings from this research add considerably to our understanding of the problems women face in entering the non-traditional trades and other non-traditional areas. The lessons to be learned from the Hunter experience increase our understanding of the merits of various competing strategies.

The conclusions drawn from the research focus on the general implications for policy and, except for the use of certain examples, the development of detailed strategies will be left to policy makers in each state. The findings of the research have implications for action: for organisations and groups at the federal and state government levels; for the school sector, community education, employers, labour authorities and unions; and for TAFE. However, as the purpose of the research was to investigate ways that TAFE can continue to respond to the needs of women entering non-traditional occupations, this is the main focus of the discussion and the resulting recommendations.

The most important issue raised by the findings is that any strategy has positive and negative consequences in practice. Thus assessments must be made as to the relative weight of these costs and benefits and attempts made to minimise the negative and maximise the positive problems that have implications for the general approach taken to the development of strategies by all relevant groups, organisations and government bodies as well as saying something specific. It is apparent that:

- The creation of an environment where the females are seen to be given 'special attention' creates hostility amongst males. Care must be taken to ensure that the benefits outweigh the costs.

- Unless some attempt is made to deal with the problems that all apprentices share, it will not be easy for the male to accept the fact that female apprentices face specific problems. This acceptance is important to the nature of the problems that the females face.

- Mechanisms need to be devised so that all apprentices get the support they need in a way that deals specifically with the problems the females face, without highlighting them. The clustering of female apprentices in training might be a useful strategy because of the increased likelihood of mutual support.

This would also increase (albeit marginally) the ratio of females to males, an important aspect of group relations. The organisation of support groups or special meetings for females is not likely to be useful. However, as well as mutual support, personal support from the hierarchies (in employment and education) is important.

- The apprentices (of both sexes) also need information --- about their rights and responsibilities, career paths, the labour market, unions and avenues of complaints. They all need information about the specific problems that females face because of gender relations.

- All apprentices, teachers, employers and members of the community need to be made aware that sex-based discrimination is illegal.

TAFE Colleges, teachers and policy makers have a special responsibility in the training of apprentices. They have a responsibility to provide a quality educational service that caters to the needs of all apprentices, and ensures equality of educational opportunity. This requires that teachers understand the specific problems female students face and provide appropriate support and information as required. Thus, in TAFE, the research highlights the need for:

- Clustering of female apprentices where possible;

- The establishment of a mechanism for the provision of on-going general support for all apprentices in a way that caters for the specific needs of female apprentices;

- The insertion of extra curriculum components on: the rights and responsibilities of apprentices; the conditions of work; unions; equal opportunity principles, anti-discrimination legislation and avenues for complaints; labour market trends; career path options; and small business skills avenues for further training. All aspects of the curriculum should incorporate an analysis of the implication of gender relations in society for discussion. All curriculum should be written in nonsexist language;

- The enforcement of anti-discrimination legislation, the development (if this has not already been undertaken) of a policy to eliminate sex-based harrassment and the establishment of grievance procedures;

- given that the growing numbers of females in the non-traditional trades is a relatively new occurrence, it is important to provide staff development for TAFE teachers to ensure that they understand the need to create a positive environment at college for all apprentices and to provide opportunities for teachers to discuss strategies. All initiatives should include an evaluation component.

In addition to the above, there are other, perhaps less obvious, implications for TAFE that arise from the research findings. It is important in the planning of new trade facilities that the needs of female apprentices are taken into account. All TAFE enrolment statistics should be reported by sex to enable monitoring of the participation of females in non-traditional trades (occupations). All evaluation that takes place in the Department should take into account the differing needs of each sex.

There are many indications that collaborative arrangements between TAFE and secondary schools are increasing in many States. TAFE should share some responsibility with the school sector in the provision of opportunities for young women to explore the full-range of career options. Many attempts have been made via Link programs and other joint TAFE/School initiatives to widen work options. This research illustrates the importance of such initiatives. It also indicates that it is more likely that young women will be attracted to the programs if they are practical in their orientation, for example, 'Try a Trade' Day activities. This is evidenced by the emphasis the apprentices place on the need for training to be 'relevant to the real world'.

Similarly, other groups/sectors should share with TAFE the responsibility of ensuring that the particular needs of female apprentices are met. More specifically:

a. In the school sector, the research shows that there is an obvious need for females to be given a wider range of options both in subject choice and in career information. This is not a new finding and much work is already being done in some States to address this problem. The findings do however, cast doubt on the importance of any disadvantage that females may face in their mathematics education at school to their access to the non-traditional trades.

b. In the community, there is a continued need for educational programs that aim to increase community awareness about the need for a broader range of options for women in education, training and employment.

However, whilst males are being retrenched from trade occupations this will be a very difficult process. Perhaps a different approach (but no less rigorous or energetic) will need to be taken whilst this is the case and the choice of publicity material should take into account the hostility that emerged towards 'special attention' for female apprentices in the Hunter.

c. The message to employers that arises from the research findings is clear. When they take on female apprentices they take on particular responsibility to be active in the creation of a positive work environment for all apprentices. This requires a special understanding of the specific problems that female apprentices face in the non-traditional trades. Many of the strategies for employers suggested in the recent booklet produced by the Commonwealth Affirmative Action Resource Unit are useful. (Affirmative Action Resource Unit, 1985). Unfortunately, it is difficult (if not impossible) for all small employers to implement many strategies. More use of group apprenticeship schemes would overcome some of the problems.

The clustering of female apprentices has been identified as a useful strategy. It would be useful for employers to appoint a support person for all apprentices. However, this person would need to understand the specific problems that female apprentices face.

It would also be useful for employers to conduct short induction courses for all apprentices to explain their role, the nature of the organisation, the nature of the work and their rights and responsibilities as apprentices.

Employers have a legal responsibility to enforce both Commonwealth and State anti-discrimination legislation. All employees need to be informed of their rights and responsibilities. Large employers should adopt a policy to eliminate sex-based harrassment and establish grievance procedures.

An important aspect of creating a positive work environment for all apprentices is the attitude of other workers. Employers have a responsibility to undertake the necessary steps to ensure that employees understand the work problems that other employees face. Large employers who run in-house

training programs should take this into account when devising these programs.

d. The various government Labour Authorities (Commonwealth and State) involved in the training of apprentices have a crucial role to play in promoting community and employer awareness and in providing the necessary support (including financial) for employers to cater to the needs of all apprentices. The appointment of the regional Equal Opportunity Co-ordinator in the Hunter by the NSW Department of Industrial Relations was a very useful strategy. The Kirby Report (1985) recommended that the Commonwealth financial support to employers who need to up-grade facilities before they can employ female apprentices, be reinstated. The findings of this research support this recommendation.

   In the selection of apprentice supervisors attempts should be made to appoint at least one female. A range of interventions at the State and Commonwealth level will need to be assessed for their usefulness in view of the findings of this research.

e. Unions also share a responsibility for the creation of a positive work environment for all members. This also requires that the needs of all apprentices are taken into account when devising strategies in the workplace. They also share a responsibility for the education of their members about the problems that other members face in the workplace.

The development of effective strategies to improve the women's experience of, and access to, non-traditonal occupations depends upon close co-operation between all sectors/groups involved. This research establishes the need for specific strategies to achieve this end. Given that few evaluations of initiatives in this area have been conducted, the findings of the research point the way forward to a more productive approach.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO TAFE

1. That TAFE Authorities attempt to cluster female apprentices where practical.

2. That TAFE Counselling services in each State convene a meeting of the appropriate people in that State (for example, counsellors, Women's Contact Officers and teachers) to devise a mechanism for the provision of on-going general support for apprentices. This should be done in ways that cater for the specific needs of female apprentices.

3. That TAFE Authorities insert extra curriculum components or perspectives in trade courses on:

    * the rights and responsibilities of apprentices;
    * the conditions of work in trade occupations;
    * unions;
    * equal opportunity principles, anti-discrimination legislation and avenues for complaints;
    * labour market trends and career path options;
    * small business skills; and
    * avenues for further training.

    All aspects of this curriculum should incorporate an analysis of the implications of gender relations on the relevant issue/topic.

    All curriculum should be written in non-sexist language.

4. That TAFE Authorities develop a policy to eliminate sex-based harassment for students and institute appropriate mechanisms for the handling of grievances.

5. That TAFE Authorities ensure the inclusion in Teacher Education Courses of appropriate curriculum components or perspectives on the specific needs of females training in the non-traditional occupations.

6. That TAFE Planning Personnel at the CENTRAL and COLLEGE levels take the needs of female apprentices into

account in the planning of new and updated trade facilities.

7. That TAFE Personnel at the CENTRAL and COLLEGE Levels report all enrolment statistics by sex.

8. That TAFE Personnel at the CENTRAL and COLLEGE Levels liaise with other sections (schools, community groups, labour authorities, unions and particularly employers) when developing strategies to improve women's experience in, and access to, non-traditional occupations.

9. That TAFE Personnel at the CENTRAL and COLLEGE Levels provide increased opportunities for young women to explore the full-range of career options via joint TAFE/School initiatives.

10. That TAFE COLLEGES conduct staff development on the findings of this research and the specific needs of female apprentices.

11. That TAFE Principals provide the opportunity and encouragement for TAFE TEACHERS to develop experience in non-traditional areas of education and training.

12. That greater attention be given to evaluation when new initiatives/strategies, particularly pilot programs, are developed and implemented within TAFE. Program development should include an evaluation specification.

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

Affirmative Action Resource Unit, Strategies for Employers for Supporting Female Apprentices in Non-Traditional Trades. Affirmative Action Issues, Paper No. 1. Office of the Status of Women, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, January, 1985.

Earley, P.D. Girls and Trades. Women's View of 'Men's Work': The Need for Change. Community Task Force for Youth Employment, Newcastle, 1981.

Heggart, K. 'Women Apprentices: An Empirical Case Study of Women Entering Male Dominated Trades in the Hunter Region'. Thesis, Sociology Department, University of Newcastle, 1982.

Kirby, P.E.F. (Chair, Committee of Inquiry into Labour Market Programs). Report of the Committee of Inquiry into Labour Market Programs. Canberra: AGPS, 1985.

Newell, J. 'Support Programme for Females in Non-Traditional Training in the Hunter Region'. Project Officer's Report, Newcastle College of TAFE, November, 1983.

Osman, R. Mathematics in Trade Courses. Working Paper 2, TAFE National Centre for Research and Development, Adelaide, 1984.

Willis, P. Learning to Labour: How Working Class Kids get Working Class Jobs. London: Saxon House, 1978.

Waugh, J. 'Male Apprentices Responses to the Presence of Young Women in Trades'. Unpublished thesis, University of New England, March, 1984.